

Washington, DC — Today, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-7), a former 3-Star Admiral, announced that he was visiting Iraq with Senator Chuck Hagel (R-NE). The Congressman and Senator Hagel will leave this evening for their visit to assess military, political, economic, and reconstruction conditions in Iraq. Congressman Sestak serves on the House Armed Services Committee; Senator Hagel, a Vietnam War veteran, serves on the Senate Foreign Relations and Intelligence Committees.

“I welcome this opportunity to join Senator Hagel in visiting Iraq to fully assess the situation,” stated Congressman Sestak. “I remain strongly concerned that we are currently involved in an inconclusive, open-ended involvement within a country where the long term benefits do not match what we need to reap.”

Senator Hagel invited Congressman Sestak to join him on this trip to Iraq after watching Joe’s March 18 appearance on Meet the Press, in which Joe debated former Congressman Tom Delay and Richard Perle, former chairman of the Pentagon’s Defense Policy Board, about the need to redeploy from Iraq by a date certain ( <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/17628142/> ). As part of their visit, Sestak and Hagel will hold comprehensive consultations with the governments of Iraq, U.S. officials, and other international and non-government officials.

Currently, approximately 138,000 U.S. troops are stationed in Iraq. More than 7,000 are from the Pennsylvania National Guard and Reserve Units. Sestak will also meet with the troops to discuss their field conditions as well as learn more about their resources and techniques used in Iraq.

Congressman Sestak and Senator Hagel will travel during the next few days. Due to the safety concerns and the secure nature of the trip, further information about the times and locations are not currently available.

*Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on*

*Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.*

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